

e-Update October 2009

Welcome to the 54th edition of e-Update, the monthly electronic bulletin from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team.

The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed with the latest developments in ICT.

The information in e-Update has been taken from Becta and other information sources. Details on how to subscribe to these can be found at the end of e-Update.

For information on how to subscribe to/ unsubscribe from e-Update, please see the section towards the end of e-Update.

e-Update can also be found on the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> and on the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>.

If you have any comments on e-Update, please send them to adickson@buckscc.gov.uk.

BucksGfL Learning Portal (BLP)

Mike Woods, ICT Adviser

This promises to be an exciting year for ICT developments in schools in Buckinghamshire and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight possibly the most important - the further development of phase 2 pilot of the **BucksGfL Learning Portal (BLP)**.

BLP complies with the DCSF Online Reporting requirements announced by Schools Minister Jim Knight in January 2008. He is reported as saying that all secondary schools will be expected to have real-time reporting systems up and running by 2010 and all primary schools two years later.

"We know from schools around the country that if families are going to be involved in their children's education really effectively, they need a good two way flow of information - a channel which is more efficient and more frequent than a once a year written report, or a letter home when there is a problem or something to celebrate." (http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0006)

Schools are required to engage with parents and provide information on children's achievement, progress, attendance, behaviour and special needs wherever, whenever they want using secure, online systems. BLP enables all this to happen and it is being provided **FREE** to all BucksGfL schools.

Following a successful pilot in 25 schools, BLP is being made available to all schools in early November. The following is a brief summary of the benefits and services available through the portal.

Teachers can use the site to update a range of data such as attendance marks, test scores or homework marks and write reports via the web (even from home), and pupils can view information such as homework diaries, test scores, school announcement information or personalised timetables.

Parents can access information such as the attendance records, assessment scores, reports and homework diaries for their children.

In addition, BLP has been developed to provide a wide range of extra services.

These include:

Texting to Parents: Use of the latest technology to allow text messages to be sent to school staff and parents, allowing a school to send an SMS message to any registered mobile phone. We will be including a number of **FREE** texts - roughly equivalent to 5% of a school's pupil number for each day of the school year. So a 200 pupil school would receive approximately 2000 free texts to use to support its management of pupil attendance the system can automatically retrieve absentee data from your SIMS system making the process very simple to use. However in addition to supporting attendance issues, extra texts can be purchased for 4.5 pence each and used if a school wishes to text staff or parents with more general school announcements.

A county wide Exchange Server: This enables school based email addresses to be made available for staff and provides access to common calendars, allowing scheduling of meetings etc.

Integration with the BucksGfL Moodle VLE.

Access to a range of e-portfolio tools, including Web 2.0 applications such as Honeycomb tailored for use by both primary and secondary pupils (and staff) together with an on-line storage space for pupils work.

High Security for BLP staff log-ins: Due to recent guidance on data security produced by BECTA we have arranged for the provision of 'One Time Password' tokens to be made available to schools in the BLP pilot. These are physical devices given to each member of staff and offer '2nd factor authentication' (a unique and changing pin number) in addition to the normal username and password for staff users logging in to the portal site.

We are also part of the DCSF Gateway to Educational Services project, which is planned to integrate with BLP, and will allow access for parents to a wide range of other services such as Online School Admissions and Online applications for free school meals.

For many schools these extra features will be at least as important, if not more so, than Online Reporting (which is provided through the integration into BLP of **SIMS Learning Gateway**), especially since many of them will be useful in learning and teaching in the classroom.

Although users will be able to log in to BLP using their normal BucksGfL username and password, to allow a school to fully engage with BLP (and use services such as Texting to parents) an extra program - AutoUpdate developed by Atomwide -will need to be installed on each schools SIMS server. This is required as BLP will need access to information such as parents' mobile phone numbers which only resides within each school and AutoUpdate will provide a way for the central BLP system to use such data.

Installation and configuration of AutoUpdate is something that our engineers can perform as they roll out an updated version of the BucksGfL **Cachepaq** unit which is due for installation within the next few months as part of our normal maintenance schedule, but in a small number of cases your network support team may also need to be involved. For most primary schools that buy support from the IT Schools team (BEMIST), this job will be done for them. Once installed, AutoUpdate will also remove the need for a school to manually update the list of BucksGfL users with Atomwide, as this will be completed automatically by the system.

We are very aware of data protection and e-safety issues and I would like to reassure you that the use of this system will not result in the extraction from your SIMS system of any sensitive pupil or staff data. BLP (via SIMS Learning Gateway) provides a secure web based window on information held within your SIMS system and you will retain complete control over what data is displayed within BLP at all times.

Access to BLP resources (including all training) is FREE to all BucksGfL schools.

I am aware that at this point in time some schools may not feel it appropriate for them to allow access by parents to their children's attendance records, assessment scores etc (via SIMS Learning Gateway) but would still like access to the wider range of BLP resources. To this end we are making two options available: Option 1 to include SIMS Learning Gateway, and Option 2 without SIMS Learning Gateway *at this time*.

There is likely to be great demand for access to BLP therefore if you have not already done so, I would urge you to return the reply form as soon as possible to allow us to schedule installations and training. A form can be obtained by contacting Karen Fagan by email to kafagan@buckscc.gov.uk.

If you would like any further information about the BLP project please do not hesitate to contact me on 0794 123 9537 or email: mawoods@buckscc.gov.uk

Free VLE training

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

This is just a reminder to Buckinghamshire LA schools who are on BucksGfL Broadband and using the LA provided Moodle installation that you can have free training in school for teachers on using the VLE. To arrange training, please contact your school's link ICT consultant – Pat Trowbridge, Andy Dickson or Geoff Lambrechts. If you are unsure who your link ICT consultant is, please contact Karen Fagan kafagan@buckscc.gov.uk.

Sums Online

ICT Curriculum Support Team

Moodle is the open-source Learning Platform that is used by a large proportion of UK schools. Buckinghamshire are the most advanced local authority in introducing Moodle into their schools. We are therefore delighted that SUMS Maths has been selected as one of the first curriculum packages to be bought for Moodle on an LA wide licence. SUMS Maths and Moodle work very well together.

The ICT Curriculum Support Team invites you to try out a selection of the interactive activities for Yr.1 - 6 pupils from the weblink below. Go to the ***Evaluate our software*** section and click on ***The Playground*** link. There are 8 sample activities.

Children can enjoy a fun range of learning games. Teachers: you can use the activities with interactive whiteboards, or you can encourage your pupils to use the activities themselves.

Details of how to access the full range of activities through your schools VLE (Moodle) will be available shortly.

URL: <http://sums.co.uk/>

BucksGfL VLE Content: i-board Resources for FS & KS1

ICT Curriculum Support Team

There are 600+ i-board interactive resources for Numeracy, Literacy, Science, RE, History and Geography. The link below will give you access to all the resources to try out.

The ICT Curriculum Support Team has agreed to pay for a 3 year subscription (normal cost £300 per school) for all 600+ resources for PRUs, Infant, Junior & Combined schools.

i-board & the ICT Curriculum Support Team are currently working on a solution to enable these resources to be easily added to your VLE. It is hoped that the resources will be available during the second half of the Autumn term. We will let you know when they are ready.

You can access these activities using the web address below. Click on the library icon to explore the teaching & learning potential of these activities.

URL: <http://www.la.bucks.iboard.co.uk/>

ICT Schools Team - ICT Curriculum Technical Support

Karen Wilkinson, ICT Schools Team

The ICT Schools Team are pleased to announce that Carol Noxon, our Curriculum Support technician has recently obtained RM Accredited Technician status. This means that schools supported by Carol who have CC3 or CC4 networks can ask RM for a rebate on their RM Support contract.

If your school is interested in having Carol support your curriculum PCs (either in classrooms or the ICT Suite), please contact pcsupportschool@buckscc.gov.uk tel: 01494 540202 for more information

Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge 2009/10 in Buckinghamshire

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

The Jaguar Cars Maths in Motion Challenge has now become well established in the calendars of many schools across the UK as a way of engaging children of all ages in an exciting and motivating mathematics based project that is suitable for all ages from 10 upwards.

The Challenge is based on Cambridgeshire Software House's 'Cars Maths in Motion' software and is sponsored by Jaguar, Cambridgeshire Software House, iDesk, Quizdom, Rapid, Alta, Rewards4Schools, Stemnet and Wildern School.

The Challenge involves students, aged 10 to 16, working together in small teams to try and set up a race between virtual Grand Prix cars using tried and tested motor racing simulation software. The work needed to do this can be undertaken in a series of maths lessons or as part of a maths club activity - it's up to you! Both boys and girls will become involved in the delights of long division, long multiplication, percentages, scale,

the measuring of angles with protractors, ratio and a whole lot more besides. A full list of what is covered can be found on the Challenge website <http://www.mathschallenge.co.uk>.

The aim of the Challenge is to help raise standards of achievement in mathematics in all schools and to demonstrate that mathematics is not only a useful skill to have but one that can be fun and stand students in good stead throughout life. The 2009/10 Challenge is open to any school in either the State or Independent sectors. There are three age ranges in the 2009/10 Challenge:

Age Range 1: Any child of Primary School age.

Age Range 2: Any child in years 7, 8 and 9.

Age Range 3: Any child in years 10 and 11.

The Challenge is run through a national network of Lead Centres. The ICT Curriculum Support Team is the Lead Centre for Buckinghamshire Schools.

Each participating school, whether Primary or Secondary, will run a series of internal races to find its own winner who will take part in a Buckinghamshire knockout round in March 2010. Schools that make it through the knockout round will meet in April 2010 for the Buckinghamshire Final. The Buckinghamshire primary, KS3 and KS4 winners will then race with other LA winners in the national semi-final knockout round to determine which schools are invited to take part in the National Final in June 2010.

A leaflet with information on the Maths Challenge including pricing and an order form for the Cars: Maths in Motion software is available here:

<http://www.bucksict.org.uk/Teacher%20Resources/CarsMIM.htm>

<http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=127>

Any Buckinghamshire schools who would like to be involved in the Maths Challenge should contact Andy Dickson, tel. 01296 334994, email adickson@buckscc.gov.uk

Discounted Software

Andy Dickson, ICT Consultant

The ICT Curriculum Support Team has partnership agreements with the BLi Group (TAG, SEMERC, Sherston, Busy Brains and Economatics), 2Simple Software, Softease and Crick Software.

Software from the companies above can be purchased through the ICT Curriculum Support at an amazing **20% discount!!**

The ICT Curriculum Support Team can only supply software to Buckinghamshire LA schools.

To find out the products available and the prices **before** discount, please visit the websites:

BLi Group <http://www.blieducation.com>

SEMERC <http://www.semERC.com>

Busy Brains <http://www.busybrains.com>

2Simple <http://www.2simpleshop.com>

Economatics <http://www.economatics-education.co.uk>

TAG <http://www.taglearning.com>

Sherston <http://www.sherston.com>

Softease <http://www.softease.com>

Crick <http://www.cricksoft.com/uk>

To order software from these companies, please contact Karen Fagan on 01296 334994.

Sherston Mega Deal – Offer Extended

Sherston

Sherston are pleased to announce that their Mega Deal offer has been extended to 30 November. The Mega Deal offers over one hundred of Sherston's most popular titles on a single external computer hard drive. The range of resources covers a wide range of curriculum areas and ages from three to eleven. The range also includes some titles from Sherston and SEMERC for those with special educational needs.

Not only is the range of resources comprehensive they are easy to access and, if required, to install. Resources are supported with user guides for all products.

The Mega Deal is available at a special Buckinghamshire price of £999. To place an order, please contact Matt Williams at BLi Education m.williams@blieducation.com

For more info visit:

<http://www.taglearning.com/productdetails/Sherston+Resource+Pack.html>

Ictopus – October's Lessons2go

Ictopus

Ictopus (ICT online primary user support) is a support service for primary education. Anyone can sign up for the service (free of charge) and will then receive each week a six page printable magazine and a set of activity suggestions. There will also be a regular newsletter or e-bulletin. These resources (and more) will be archived on the ictopus website <http://www.ictopus.org.uk> where there will also be access to classroom activities and a variety of other resources and projects. Ictopus builds on the Becta Direct2U service and also the legacy of MAPE (Micros and Primary Education).

Login first, then access the activities via Resources and lessons2go.

Available on 7th October 2009

The next batch of lessons2go is now available. Both lessons make use of resources on the internet. The geography lesson uses searchable maps, the science lesson uses a site with a wealth of resources on the topic of animals.

This week we have activities for the following age groups:

- Age 6-7: Geography, Maps; Zooming in and zooming out
This lesson uses online maps to help children appreciate the shape of the country and the effect of zooming in and out. The activity encourages discussion aiming to develop the children's understanding of maps.
- Age 7-8: Science, Animals Feeding
In this new lesson children use a number of collections of photographs from ARKive Education to study animals to find out what different animals eat.

Available on 21st October 2009

The next pair of lessons2go is now available. This week the focus is definitely creative! Dip into these two ideas for art and music and see if you can adapt them to your needs.

This week we have activities for the following age groups:

- Age 5-6: Art, Landscapes
In this activity children will look at landscape pictures created using a variety of media and processes; identify what they like and don't like and then use a simple paint program with clip art or stamps to create a landscape picture of their own.
- Age 10-11: Music, Film Music
In this lesson children will listen to some film music, discuss its qualities in relation to the films and then compose and play a piece of music to accompany a cartoon clip.

Subscribing/ Unsubscribing to e-Update

Teachers in Buckinghamshire schools that are connected to BucksGfL Broadband can receive e-Update by email to their BucksGfL email address.

To subscribe:

1. Visit the BucksGfL website <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk>.
2. Click on the **Login** link in the top right corner.
3. Login using your BucksGfL username and password (your BucksGfL username is the first part of your BucksGfL email address i.e. the bit before the @. Your password is the same as for your email).

4. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
5. You will be asked if you would like to enrol on the e-Update course. Choose **Yes**.

Once you are enrolled, you will be emailed each edition of e-Update to your BucksGfL email address when they are posted on the BucksGfL website.

Note: If you don't wish to use your BucksGfL email address or don't have one (i.e. your school is not connected to BucksGfL Broadband or you are outside Buckinghamshire) then e-Update will still be available to you. However, you will have to download it from the Buckinghamshire ICT Curriculum Support Team's website at <http://www.bucksict.org.uk/e-update/> or the Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning website at <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/resources/course/view.php?id=126>

To unsubscribe:

6. Visit the BucksGfL website <http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk>.
7. Click on the **Login** link in the top right corner.
8. Login using your BucksGfL username and password (your BucksGfL username is the first part of your BucksGfL email address i.e. the bit before the @. Your password is the same as for your email).
9. In the Course Categories section on the main page, click on **ICT**, then click on **e-Update**.
10. On the left, click on the **Unenrol me from e-Update**.

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Becta

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